He became a public enemy after he blacked the eye of a motorist for calling him "stoopid fuckin' wop." He'd just rammed the man's car, but it was the man's fault, for stopping on the highway. He hadn't cared too much about the accident, although he loved his Mercedes, but being called stupid enraged him. He had paid his way through years of college, attending full-time classes while working as a security guard in Canadian WASP banks. Grabbing the man felt like aiming at him down the barrel of a shotgun. He relished the moment. Slugging him was like squeezing the trigger. Now he had to attend an anger-management class run by a New Age quack who'd taken fewer psychology courses than himself.

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Mildred never came to the office for her medication. A worker would bring it to her, the pills in a red plastic dosette in one hand, the water in a little paper cup in the other. Some workers preferred to remove the pills from the dosette and put them in a paper cup. They could then carry two cups in one hand, the plastic water pitcher in the other, and do two tenants' "meds" in one trip.

When Serge climbed up the dark-varnished stairs to the second floor, and knocked on Mildred's door, he was usually greeted with threats and abuse. Mildred was a tough broad.